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JAMESTOWN BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES (BPU) CELEBRATES PUBLIC POWER WEEK, OCT. 7-13

The Jamestown Board of Public Utilities (BPU) will celebrate Public Power Week, Oct. 7-13, along with more than 2,000 other electric utilities from around the country that collectively provide electricity on a not-for-profit basis to 46 million Americans.

“Public Power Week provides the BPU with the opportunity to stop and consider how public power helps our customers in Jamestown. We are absolutely dedicated to providing excellent service and the lowest rates possible,” said BPU General Manager Dave Leathers.

Unlike private power companies, public power utilities such as the BPU are public service institutions and do not serve stockholders.

“It is our mission to serve our customers,” continued Leathers. “We measure success by our reliability, our ability to provide electricity at affordable rates and by our response to customer concerns.”

Public power customers nationwide pay 14 percent less than the amount that for-profit electric companies charge their customers, according to the American Public Power Association. In addition, public power utilities return tax equivalent payments to schools and municipalities within the territories they serve.

While each public power company is different, citizens of public power communities have a direct voice in utility decisions and policies, both on voting day and in open meetings where board business is conducted publicly. In Jamestown, the Board is appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. Two BPU directors serve from Jamestown City Council; one director represents the City’s Department of Public Works; five directors are appointed as community members; and the Mayor himself is a director, serving by virtue of his elected office. Monthly meetings are open to the public and monthly meeting minutes are posted on-line at www.jamestownbpu.com.

Further, the BPU website homepage changes frequently, posting most recent news about the utility and its services. The agenda of each meeting is posted on the day prior to the meeting. A monthly customer newsletter is mailed to customers with their billing statements. FACEBOOK and Twitter pages include up-to-date utility news, especially in the event of electrical outages or water system concerns.

Public power normally comes with reliable power. Because the Jamestown BPU is a smaller utility, its employees are members of the community. BPU employees are customers’ friends and neighbors and are quick to respond to utility problems in the area. They work hard planning for and achieving excellent reliability in the electric territory.

Public Power Week is a national, annual event sponsored in conjunction with the American Public Power Association (APPA) in Washington, D.C. APPA is the service organization for community and state-owned electric utilities.

The BPU was created in 1891 and established as an independent organization by the City Charter in 1923. Today, it serves more than 16,400 residential customers, and just over 2,750 commercial, industrial and other municipal customers.

“We are proud to have served Jamestown and our customers for 121 years,” Leathers said. “The BPU knows how vital electricity is for the people of our community. We continue to find ways to deliver it reliably, safely and with special attention to cost and the environment,” Leathers commented.

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